

BILL SHUSTER

9TH DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA

**COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE**
CHAIRMAN

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

SUBCOMMITTEE:
INTELLIGENCE, EMERGING THREATS
& CAPABILITIES

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3809

May 16, 2014

Environmental Protection Agency
401 M Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024-2610

Regarding:

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The attached communication is submitted for your consideration, and to ask that the request made therein be complied with, if possible.

Any assistance you can offer in this matter would be greatly appreciated.

If additional details are required or if the information requested can be relayed over the phone, please do not hesitate to contact my Chambersburg office at (717) 264-8308.

If you will advise me of your action in this matter and return your reply to me, I will appreciate it.

Very Truly Yours,



BILL SHUSTER
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

100 Lincoln Way East, Suite B
Chambersburg, PA 17201
(717) 264-8308

WFS: nb

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SUBJECT/PROBLEM:

Hog CAFO my wife Fulton Co Pa help in
stepping plan CAFO my concerns are exposure
to water pollutants and air contamination
ie MRSA see attachments for more.

In accordance with Title 5, Section 552a of the United States Code, I hereby authorize
 Congressman Bill Shuster to request assistance on my behalf from the EPA
 (NAME OF AGENCY)
 in connection with my above-mentioned subject/problem, and authorize discussion of my
 records with Congressman Shuster and/or his representative for a period of one year from
 the date below:

NAME:

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ADDRESS:

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PHONE:

(b) (6)

SIGNATURE:

DATE: 5-1-14

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: (b) (6) (b) (6) (b) (6) (b) (6)

DATE OF BIRTH:

(b) (6) - (b) (6)

Please complete this form and include a brief explanation of your problem, then mail to:

Congressman Bill Shuster
 100 Lincoln Way East, Suite B
 Chambersburg, PA 17201

Phone - 717-264-8308

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Environmental Health

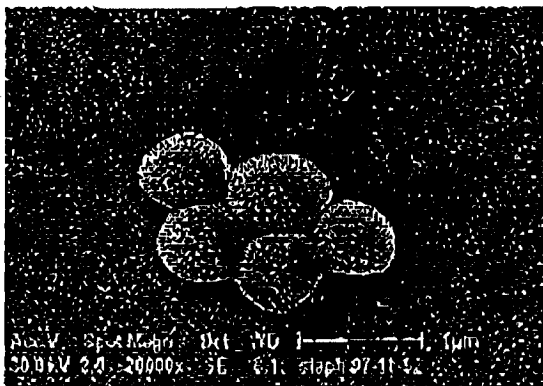
MRSA Infection Found in Communities Near Pig Farms

SEPTEMBER 26, 2013 by EDITOR in ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, FEATURED, ONE HEALTH, PUBLIC HEALTH, RESEARCH NEWS, RURAL HEALTH

Evidence of links between large-scale animal-rearing practices and human health in neighboring communities continues to accumulate.

By Stephanie Soucheray

On Oct. 18 and 19, the North Carolina Environmental Justice Network will hold its 15th annual meeting in Whitakers to discuss unsafe agricultural practices in poor, rural and black communities across the state.



Magnified view of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). Image courtesy the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

While the NCEJN has been concerned with issues such as dumping, factory farms and clean water, Executive Director Gary Grant said that this year they'll also be discussing agricultural illness in front of a government listening panel.

There's good reason for concern.

Last month, UNC researchers published in the online journal PLoS One the results of a study, "Livestock-Associated Methicillin and Multidrug Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* Is Present among Industrial, Not

Antibiotic-Free Livestock Operation Workers in North Carolina."

They found that factory-farm workers were much more likely to have colonized MRSA (present in nasal swabs) than workers who worked on antibiotic-free farms.

Now a new study from John Hopkins University further describes the connection between factory farms and MRSA.

The study, "High-density livestock operations, crop field application of manure, and the risk of community-associated methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* infection in Pennsylvania," published this week in JAMA Internal Medicine, shows that there is an "environmental pathway" that MRSA follows in communities near high-density swine-production facilities.

"We found that in a general population in Pennsylvania, people with a higher exposure to high-density swine production were at an increased risk of community-associated MRSA infection and skin and soft-tissue infection," said Joan Casey, a lead author of the study. "This risk was about both the livestock operations where the animals live and about the crop fields where manure was spread."



Aerial photo of a field near a hog CAFO on which animal waste is being sprayed, Duplin and Jones county, 2003. Photo courtesy Socially Responsible Agricultural Project, flickr creative commons

The John Hopkins study is the first to link factory farming to MRSA infection, not just colonization, and Casey said the UNC and JHU studies both suggest that these types of farming practices are bad for public health.

"While we did not demonstrate every step in the causal chain from farm to infection, we do believe that the association is plausible," said Casey. "There is certainly an environmental pathway."

Like the UNC study, the JHU study implicates the overuse of antibiotics in industrial-farmed animals as being a risk factor for MRSA. Animals are given what's known as "sub-therapeutic" amounts of antibiotics in their feed and water supply to stave off illness, rather than to treat an acute infection. The majority of the antibiotics given to

animals in these situations are not absorbed, and instead are passed through to the animal's manure.

That manure is applied to crop fields, and neighboring residential communities, according to Casey, are at a greater risk for community-associated MRSA, health care-associated MRSA and skin and soft-tissue infections.

Casey's study looked at 1,539 patients with community-associated MRSA, 1,335 with health care-associated MRSA, 2,895 with skin and soft-tissue infections and 2,914 healthy controls patients in a Pennsylvania health care system between 2005 and 2010.

Higher swine manure exposure meant an increased likelihood of all MRSA infections, and even just living near a high-density swine livestock operation resulted in an increased risk for community-associated MRSA.

Steve Wing, who co-authored UNC's study, said JHU's study further illustrated the problem with giving farm animals antibiotics.

"This is an important finding about a problem, the sub-therapeutic use of antibiotics, that's been recognized a long time," he said.



Gary Grant of the Tillery (N.C.) People's Clinic and the North Carolina Environmental Justice Network at a community forum in 2006. Photo courtesy of NIEHS

Wing said that the findings in the study should be a concern to people in North Carolina who live near high-density farms.

"Eastern North Carolina has the densest livestock production, but it's also one of the poorest areas in the state," he said.

Unlike in the JHU study, which benefited from combing a large insurance database for information on MRSA infection, many people in the Eastern part of the state are uninsured, so Wing said it would be difficult to

obtain accurate information about MRSA infection rates.

He also said that while research like this is important, it often does little to change policy. The sub-therapeutic use of antibiotics has been banned in Europe for years, but a bill that would do the same in the States has failed to get passed in Congress.

"It takes a lot more involvement by the public to change policy," said Wing. "The public is who's affected by this."

Grant said he's been concerned about farming practices and community health since the early 1990s.

"In the beginning, many of these communities [where large farms are located] depended on well water, so runoff was a huge concern," Grant said.

He said that 20 years ago, it was legal for counties to pass individual ordinances on farming practices, but the most recent General Assembly passed legislation that makes it easier for the state to override them.


Though Grant doesn't have hard data on MRSA in North Carolina, he said sick communities do exist in rural pockets of the state.

"We are aware of it, and still trying to help communities get organized around the issue," he said.

Pittsburgh, PA
Wednesday
March 19, 2014

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Hog heaven? Study finds large hog farms lower property values

Saturday, June 07, 2003

By Don Hopey, Post-Gazette Staff Writer

Factory-scale hog farms, where hundreds or even thousands of porkers produce piles and piles of manure, pollute water and air and are among the worst of neighbors, according to a land-use study by Penn State researchers.

The study, released yesterday as the third annual Sustainable Hog Farming Summit convened in Gettysburg, found that allowing a medium- or large-scale factory farm to set up shop near a residential area lowers nearby property values by more than \$1,800. Using the same property for a traditional farm actually increases the value of nearby properties.

Only landfills have a worse effect on adjacent property values, according to the study of Berks County property values.

The study was conducted by Richard Ready and Charles Abdalla of Penn State's Agricultural and Environmental Economics Department and sponsored by Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future.

The study found that a sewage treatment plant has a less depressing effect on nearby housing prices than a factory farming operation.

"The Penn State study is more evidence that local communities and residents must be allowed to protect themselves from factory farms," said Jan Jarrett, PennFuture's outreach director, who is attending the summit of environmental leaders, farmers, rural community leaders, restaurant owners and chefs.

Jarrett said proposed state legislation that would limit or prohibit local county or municipal control of factory-farm locations would take away any control communities have over the massive meat factories.

"Rural communities need the ability to enact common-sense regulations to protect residents' health, peace of mind, quality of life and property values,"

she said.

In Pennsylvania, there are 1,000 high-density pig, cow or chicken farms, also known as Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations, already operating in 25 counties.

The biggest is in Perry County, and the most can be found in Lancaster, Lebanon and Berks counties. More than 135 are big enough to require their own water-quality pollution permits.

One hog excretes nearly 3 gallons of waste per day, or 2.5 times the average human's daily total. A 3,000-sow hog factory will produce about 25 tons of raw manure a day.



According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, hog, chicken and cattle waste has polluted 35,000 miles of rivers in 22 states and contaminated groundwater in 17 states.

Big hog farms can also produce dangerous levels of such noxious gases as hydrogen sulfide, ammonia and methane, and intense odors that have been detected more than four miles from the site.

The study found that open space -- including forested acreage and grass, pasture and cropland -- located within a quarter-mile of a house had the largest positive effect on the value of that property.

The summit in Gettysburg is being held to promote sustainable farming and farm-to-market family farm initiatives, and to discuss the impacts of industrial-scale hog confinement and production practices on rural communities, human health, animal health and the environment.

Don Hopey can be reached at dhopey@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1983.

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